

Bahrain prepares for 2024 School Games

Bahrain finalizes preparations for historic event, welcoming 5,000 students from 80 countries from October 23-31 | P 12

WORLD 6 **Israel prepares for Lebanon ground offensive**

THE DAILY **tribune**



Angelina Jolie overwhelmed by 'beautiful feeling' of motherhood

8 CELEBS

BUSINESS 5 **Tamkeen boosts citizen opportunities**

Private hospital workers receive two-month unpaid wages, confirms Labour Ministry

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Labour confirmed yesterday that employees of a private hospital, which reduced its operations in August, have received their wages.

Salaries for July and August were paid, with the remaining payment for September expected by the end of the month.

The hospital, employing approximately 190 staff, including 50 Bahrainis, cut back major services after encountering financial troubles, leaving workers unpaid for two months.

Around 30 specialities, such as general surgery and obstetrics, were affected when the hospital shifted to outpatient care in late August.

In its statement, the Ministry confirmed that "all outstanding wages will be settled in line with Bahrain's labour laws."

The Ministry also noted efforts to find alternative employment for the affected Bahraini workers.

"Those still without work will receive compensation of 60 per cent of their insured wage for up to nine months, or until they secure new employment," the ministry stated.

Travel rush at Bahrain airport

TDT | Manama

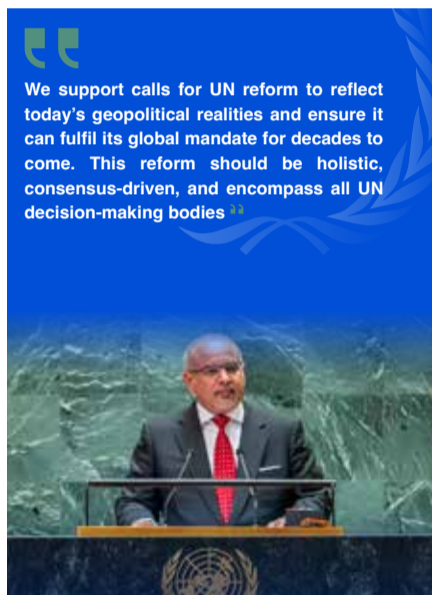
Bahrain International Airport welcomed 884,074 passengers, marking a significant increase in traffic last month, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications.

220 fils (includes VAT)



Time for Change

HRH Prince Salman Calls for UN Reform at UN General Assembly

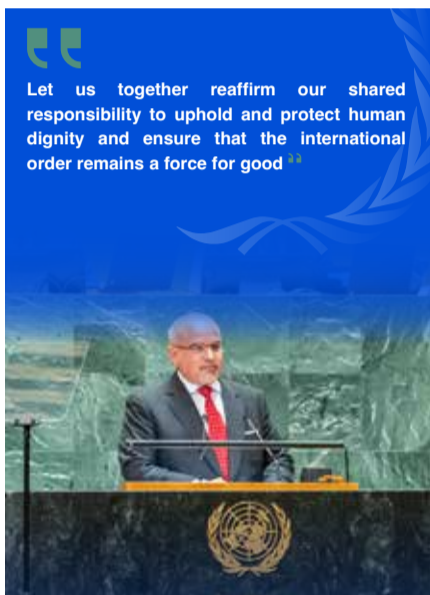


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His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, delivered a powerful speech at the 79th session of United Nations General Assembly, urging the global community to address growing geopolitical challenges through comprehensive reform of international institutions.

Reflecting on the creation of the UN after the horrors of World War II, HRH Prince Salman, who delivered the speech on behalf of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, emphasized the organization's role as a pillar of global stability

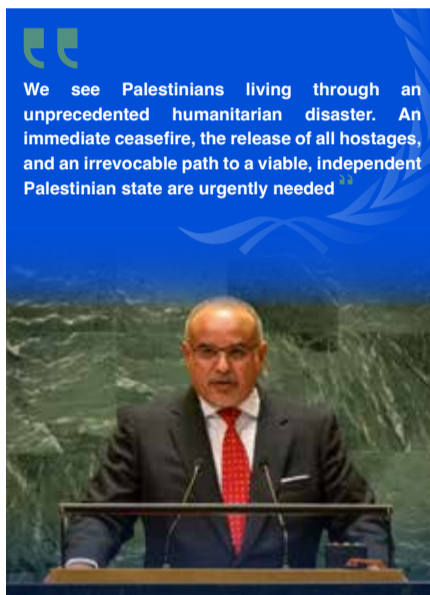
However, he warned that the world now faces even more



complex and unpredictable challenges, including environmental crises, health threats, and conflicts that undermine international peace and security.

Pressing challenges

"Nineteen years ago, I had the honour of standing here and addressing this historic hall, where I touched on the pressing challenges confronting our world at the time poverty, famine, deadly infectious diseases, civil wars, and weapons of mass destruction. These global challenges not only persist but have intensified. We find ourselves in a far more dangerous and unpredictable time due to major tectonic shifts in the global geopolitical order. In addition, revolutionary new technologies have emerged that will fundamentally reshape the



world as we know it. Furthermore, environmental and health challenges that know no borders have also multiplied and grown in complexity requiring us all to work together regardless of our differences.

International order

"The very systems designed to uphold the international order are under strain. Eighty years after its formation, as the threats and challenges we collectively face evolve, this important institution, which our global community relies on to safeguard the international rules-based order, must evolve as well. Today, we support the calls for reform of the United Nations to ensure that it reflects current geopolitical realities so that it is equipped to continue carrying



out its important global mandate for decades to come. This reform should be holistic, consensus-driven, and encompass all the decision-making bodies of the United Nations, including the UN Security Council," His Royal Highness stated in the speech during the High-Level General Debate held in New York, USA, calling for the UN to evolve to meet today's geopolitical realities.

Humanitarian disaster

HRH Prince Salman highlighted ongoing global conflicts, pointing to the humanitarian disaster in Gaza, where over 40,000 Palestinians, including women and children, have died.

He called for an immediate ceasefire and the creation of an

independent Palestinian state. HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister also expressed concern about the continuing conflict in Ukraine and rising tensions in the South China Sea, warning that these conflicts threaten global stability.

In a significant appeal, HRH Prince Salman called for wide-ranging reforms at the UN, including its Security Council, to better reflect the geopolitical landscape.

United global front

He also urged for a united global front to govern the development of artificial intelligence, warning that technology, if left unchecked, could exacerbate global divisions rather than promote peace and prosperity.

Gallup Global report

Bahrain recognised as one of the world's 'safest' nations

H. Naser
TDT | Manama

A new Gallup poll has placed Bahrain among the world's safest countries, highlighting the Kingdom's strong public safety record.

The survey, released on September 24th, revealed that 87% of respondents living in Bahrain

felt safe walking alone at night.

The Gallup Global Safety Report also highlighted the exceptionally high safety ratings of other GCC nations.

Kuwait, for instance, achieved the highest ranking globally, with a remarkable 99% of respondents reporting feeling safe walking alone at night. Saudi Arabia and the UAE followed

closely behind, recording 92% and 90%, respectively.

Bahrain's 87% score, which is higher than many advanced countries such as Switzerland, reflects a significant level of public confidence in the Kingdom's security and a generally safe environment.

This strong showing amongst the safest nations is a testament

to the ongoing efforts of law enforcement agencies and the overall commitment to maintaining a peaceful and secure society.

The report attributed the high security levels in the GCC to economic prosperity and strong law enforcement.

Kuwait's impressive performance extended to the Law and

Order index, where it scored 98 out of 100 in 2023, maintaining its top ranking since 2019.

Globally, the Gallup report indicated that 70% of adults felt safe walking alone at night in 2023, rising to 74% in the Middle East and North Africa region.

This positive global trend is further underscored by other recent findings.

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Closer to you



'Crumbling homes' and dying heritage

Over 400 houses across Muharraq falling apart, leaving residents fearful for safety

Mohammed Darwish

Another derelict house in Muharraq collapsed earlier this week, just missing pedestrians and raising concerns about the condition of other crumbling homes in the area.

The sight of bricks and debris strewn across the alleyways exposed a dangerous problem: hundreds of homes in the historic city are falling apart, posing a serious threat to residents and the city's heritage.

While immediate dangers are being addressed, long-term solutions remain elusive, leaving residents fearful and frustrated.

For residents like Aysha, who lives near the site of the recent collapse in Block 203, the fear is palpable.

"The situation is quite alarming," she says, gesturing towards the sagging roofs and peeling paint of nearby homes. "We wonder when one of these houses will finally cause a disaster. The authorities need to take action before someone gets hurt."

Her concerns are not unfounded. In April, the kitchen roof of a house in the same district caved in during heavy rains, nearly injuring an elderly resident and her domestic worker.

This resident, whose renovation request has been pending since 2000, exemplifies the plight faced by many: unable to afford the exorbitant costs of repair, they live in constant fear.

She even resorts to sleeping with a rat trap by her head due to the rodent infestation common in these decaying structures.

Financial burdens

Local councillor Dalal Al Moqahwi has been a vocal advocate for these residents, emphasising



A police officer applies safety measures to secure a crumbling house in Muharraq Block 203



A resident, Aysha, resorted to sleeping with a rat trap by her head due to the rodent infestation common in the decaying structures.

Crown Prince and Prime Minister, seeks to breathe new life into Muharraq while conserving its rich history.

Housing Minister, His Excellency Amna Al Rumaihi, has confirmed that the Old Muharraq Development Project is now underway, with all phases expected to be finished by December 2026.

While Al Moqahwi acknowledges the Ministry's progress in areas such as Block 203 and Block 209, she notes the resistance from some families who are reluctant to move.

These homes, often their only place of residence, present a difficult choice.

Al Moqahwi stresses the need for a balanced approach, one that prioritises residents' safety without sacrificing the long-term future of the community's housing needs.

Budget

Municipal Council member Fadhel Al Oud points to the lack of a dedicated budget for the council's work, hindering their ability to address the crisis effectively.

"Our success primarily depends on coordinating with relevant authorities and relying on charitable organisations to help cover renovation costs," he told The Daily Tribune.

The council submitted a recommendation to parliament for budget allocation in the first session of the current convening period, but the outcome is still pending.

Al Oud emphasises the urgent need for a dedicated portion of the state budget to address homes at risk of collapse, particularly given the royal endorsement of the matter.



"People's lives must come before aesthetic concerns. The need for safe, affordable housing outweighs everything else."

- DALAL AL MOQAHWI, MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEMBER



"Even after I report the most dangerous ones. The authorities often just seal the entrances with a sheet of wood, which criminals easily break through."

- ABDULQADER MAHMOOD, MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEMBER



"There is an urgent need for a dedicated portion of the state budget to address homes at risk of collapse, particularly given the royal endorsement of the matter."

- FADHEL AL OUD, MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEMBER

the immediate risk of collapse. Abandoned properties have become magnets for crime, attracting drug activity and theft, according to both residents and council members like Abdulqader Mahmood.

He notes frequent complaints about strange noises coming from these abandoned houses.

"Even after I report the most dangerous ones," he explained to The Daily Tribune, "the authorities often just seal the entrances with a sheet of wood, which criminals easily break through."

The decaying structures also contribute to the spread of disease, with infestations of rats and insects posing a public health risk.

Web page

In response to worsening conditions, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning launched a web page for the Muharraq City Development Plan last November.

This initiative, following directives from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the

the financial burdens they face.

She estimates that over 400 homes across Muharraq are in various stages of disrepair, based on reports to the Municipal Council and ongoing assessments by a newly formed subcommittee involving multiple authorities.

This subcommittee is tasked

with assessing the risk level of each property, managing immediate threats, and developing a comprehensive inventory of at-risk buildings.

Al Moqahwi explains that the requirement from the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) for owners to bear the costs of demolition and

rehabilitation, often exceeding BD20,000, makes it nearly impossible for many to restore their homes, particularly those with heritage features.

"These families would have fixed their homes if they had the means," she told The Daily Tribune.

The dangers extend beyond

Indian school faces claims of mismanagement amidst fee dispute; chairman calls out vested interests

TDT | Manama

At a time when the Indian School, Bahrain is struggling to recover nearly BD700,000 in unpaid fees from parents, the United Parents Panel (UPP), the main opposition to the Progressive Parents Alliance-led executive committee, has accused the school's executive committee of using the issue as a pretext to mask its own governance failures.

The UPP criticized the committee's claim that the school's operation is threatened due to outstanding fees, calling it "strange and irresponsible."

In a press conference, UPP leaders argued that it is absurd for the school to claim it cannot function properly because of unpaid dues.

According to UPP, the current governing body, which oversees the education of more than 12,500 students, is not acting in-



United Parents Panel at the press conference

dependently but is instead being controlled by external "backseat drivers," allegedly stifling the institution's performance.

"The Indian school should not be a puppet, controlled by hidden powers that are jeopardizing the education of thousands of students," said a UPP representative.

In response to the ongoing criticism, Indian School Chairman Binu Mannil Varughese has



Binu Mannil Varughese

called out what he describes as "vested interests" attempting to harm the institution.

Speaking in an urgent press release, Varughese stated, "Every time the school sends a circular to parents asking them to pay fee arrears, it has never been disputed by anyone who genuinely wishes to see the school thrive. However, the opposition groups have not only turned this circular into a controversy but

have also escalated the matter by lodging complaints with the ministry."

According to Varughese, these opposition groups have falsely promised to waive fees if they come to power, leading some parents to withhold payments.

"Many parents who believed in these promises have now accrued significant liabilities, putting themselves and the school at risk," he added.

Financial Crisis and Opposition Interference

Varughese highlighted that the school's financial issues are typically resolved through income generated by its annual school fair, which is supported by benefactors. The proceeds from these events are used to assist students in financial need and staff members, including teachers suffering from serious illnesses.

However, due to what he described as "irresponsible complaints" filed with various ministries by opposition groups, the school has been unable to hold the fair for the past two years.

"The opposition's actions have not only harmed the school's financial stability but have also disrupted the ability of small organizations in Bahrain to hold events at the school's auditorium, which was another source of income," Varughese said.

Drains before rains

Capital Municipal Council prepares for rainy season with enhanced drainage and emergency plans

● **Call for public to cooperate in reporting any issues promptly**

H Naser
TDT | Manama

The Capital Municipal Council held its second regular meeting yesterday focusing heavily on preparations for the upcoming rainy season.

Eng. Saleh Taradah, Council President, presided over the session, where Eng. Yusuf Al Banna, Acting Head of the Capital Municipality's Cleaning Department, delivered a comprehensive report detailing the municipality's proactive measures.

Al Banna reported on collaborative efforts with various government agencies, particularly the Ministry of Works, to ensure the Governorate's readiness.

These efforts include investing in modernising the Capital Governorate's drainage systems to improve rainwater flow and minimize flooding.

Additional water pumps and tankers have been deployed to efficiently remove accumulated water from streets and low-lying areas.

Disruptions

"A detailed emergency plan, coordinated with the Ministry



Eng. Saleh Taradah and Eng. Yusuf Al Banna attend the meeting

“Collaborative efforts include investing in modernising the Capital Governorate's drainage systems to improve rainwater flow and minimize flooding. Additional water pumps and tankers have been deployed to efficiently remove accumulated water from streets and low-lying areas.”

- ENG. YUSUF AL BANNA, ACTING HEAD OF THE CAPITAL MUNICIPALITY'S CLEANING DEPARTMENT

of Works, has been developed to address potential disruptions to roads and public facilities during heavy rainfall. This plan outlines procedures for swift response and mitigation of any issues that may arise," Eng. Al Banna stated.

Moreover, he stressed the importance of community involvement for a smooth rainy season, highlighting the collaborative spirit between the municipality and other stakeholders.

He emphasised the importance of community awareness

and cooperation in reporting any issues promptly.

Optimism

Eng. Al Banna expressed optimism that the rainy season will bring benefits to the Kingdom while ensuring the safety and well-being of all citizens and residents.

From his side, Eng. Taradah expressed appreciation for the proactive measures taken by the municipality and its partners.

He underscored the importance of the comprehensive approach to managing the rainy season, balancing infrastructure improvements with community engagement to mitigate potential disruptions and maximize the benefits of rainfall.

Six arrested for illegal fishing after sea chase



Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Six men have been charged after a chase at sea, during which authorities caught them using banned bottom trawl nets to haul in 40 kilograms of fresh shrimp.

The Public Prosecution has now referred the four Indian fishermen and two Bahraini accomplices to the Minor Criminal Court, following an investigation into their illegal fishing activities.

The case came to light when the Coast Guard spotted a boat carrying the Indian suspects, who were fishing with bottom trawl nets, locally known as Kofa, a method prohibited by law.

The men attempted to flee when they saw the patrol, but officers pursued and apprehended them.

Forty kilograms of freshly caught shrimp were found aboard the vessel, which lacked proper safety equipment, including life jackets, a fire extinguisher, and a first aid kit.

Investigations revealed the involvement of two Bahraini nationals who had aided in the

illegal operation.

They have also been arrested and are being held in custody. The authorities have seized the boat involved as evidence.

The Chief of the Ministries and Public Bodies Prosecution expressed concern over the damage such illegal fishing methods can cause to Bahrain's marine life.

"Bottom trawl nets are extremely harmful to the marine environment. They are designed to catch large amounts of fish, often trapping species that are not targeted, leading to a decline in marine biodiversity," he said.

The nets are also known to destroy vital marine habitats, such as coral reefs and seagrass beds, which has a detrimental effect on the wider ecosystem.

Moreover, juvenile fish often become caught in these nets, jeopardising the long-term sustainability of fish stocks.

In addition to the illegal fishing, the defendants have been charged with failing to display proper navigational lights, sailing without a valid licence, as well as obstructing law enforcement during the inspection.

Bahrain-India youth sector cooperation



The Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports of India, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, held a virtual meeting with Her Excellency Rawan Bint Najeeb Tawfiqi, Minister of Youth Affairs, Kingdom of Bahrain, yesterday. They explored new avenues of cooperation between India and Bahrain for youth engagement and cultural exchanges. The Ambassador of India to Bahrain, H.E. Vinod K. Jacob, joined the meeting virtually.

Company owner jailed for attempt to defraud Tamkeen

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The Court of Cassation has upheld a six-month prison sentence for a company owner convicted of attempting to defraud the Labour Fund, Tamkeen.

The lower criminal court had previously sentenced the individual to six months in prison and a fine of BD500.

The charges against the defendant stemmed from his actions in 2021 and 2022, where he allegedly attempted to claim funds from Tamkeen's national employment programme, specifically the wage support programme.

The defendant was accused of submitting fraudulent documents to Tamkeen, claiming that two women were employed by his company, despite them not actually working there.

The Public Prosecution argued that the defendant's actions constituted an attempt to misappropriate public funds.

The prosecution presented evidence, including testimony from Tamkeen employees who underscored that the defendant had submitted applications for wage support for the two women, but the support was ultimately withheld after the fraud was detected.




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Tamkeen boosts citizen opportunities

HH Shaikh Isa highlights Tamkeen's success in empowering Bahrainis through career and business

● 32,000 Bahrainis benefited from Tamkeen's initiatives since November

● 47% of private sector workers receive employment and wage support

● Focus on employment, career development, and enterprise support

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His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Isa bin Salman Educational Charitable Trust and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Labour Fund (Tamkeen), reaffirmed the Kingdom of Bahrain's ongoing commitment to initiatives de-



HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa during the meeting

signed to provide quality opportunities for citizens.

These initiatives aim to enhance career development and empower Bahrainis as active participants in the Kingdom's economic progress and national development led by His Majesty the King and under the close

guidance of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

His Highness stated that the commendable achievements of Team Bahrain across various economic sectors encourage a stronger focus on expanding opportunities for Bahrainis. This

includes employment, career development, and entrepreneurship, highlighting the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors for the advancement of our Kingdom and its people.

These comments were made during the third quarter Board of



Tamkeen's programs have helped 12,017 Bahrainis enter the labour market and supported 20,032 others in career development within the first three quarters of 2024

Directors meeting of Tamkeen, chaired by His Highness, where key milestones since the launch of Tamkeen's largest support bundle were reviewed. Updates were provided on Tamkeen's three main initiatives: Employment Support, Career Development Support, and Enterprise Support.

Maha Abdulhameed Mofeez, Chief Executive of the Labour

Fund (Tamkeen), presented the progress made against the 2024 KPIs, highlighting significant progress in meeting this year's targets. Among the achievements, 12,017 Bahrainis entered the labour market through employment support, 20,032 Bahrainis received career development assistance, and 7,090 enterprises benefited from various programs, with 52% of supported enterprises being Small and Medium Enterprises.

Since the launch of Tamkeen's initiatives in November of last year, over 32,000 Bahrainis have benefitted from wage support and career development opportunities, marking Tamkeen's highest performance to date. Currently, 47% of Bahraini employees in the private sector are recipients of Tamkeen's employment and wage support programmes.

The meeting also highlighted Tamkeen's economic impact at both individual and enterprises levels, with a focus on job placement, career development, and enterprise support.

BBK wins 'Best Retail Bank 2024' award

TDT | Manama

BBK, Bahrain's leading financial institution, has been awarded "Best Retail Bank in Bahrain 2024" by the World Economic Magazine.

This esteemed accolade recognizes BBK's outstanding performance in retail banking, highlighting its commitment to innovation, customer satisfaction, and sustainable growth.

As per the renowned World Economic Magazine, BBK has demonstrated exceptional financial performance, with impressive growth in gross retail revenue over the past three years.

The Bank's commitment to achieving strong financial met-



Yaser Alsharifi

Ahmed Taqi

rics is evident in its profitability indicators, which have shown significant improvement year on year. The efficiency ratios have also been well managed, reflecting the Bank's operation-

al efficiency. Additionally, BBK's retail income and profit contribution have seen consistent growth, further solidifying its position as a market leader in Bahrain.

Yaser Alsharifi, Group Chief Executive at BBK, commented: "We take great pride in being recognized with this prestigious award from the World Economic Magazine, acknowledging the dedicated efforts of the BBK's team in providing tailored solutions to meet our clients' needs."

Ahmed Taqi, General Manager of Retail Banking at BBK, expressed his gratitude, stating: "We firmly believe that our success hinges on delivering tangible, sustainable value through responsible banking practices that foster sustainable development in the communities we serve, driving financial sector innovation, and introducing cutting-edge products and services."

Ahli United Bank partners with Gulf Hotel to offer exclusive discounts to cardholders

TDT | Manama

Ahli United Bank has announced a new partnership with Gulf Hotel, aimed at enhancing the local dining experience for its cardholders.

This collaboration introduces a range of exclusive benefits, allowing AUB debit and credit cardholders to enjoy a 15% discount at Gulf Hotel's renowned restaurants.

Starting this month, AUB cardholders can take advantage of these discounts at Gulf Hotel's celebrated restaurants, Royal Thai, Café Delices, Al Waha, Margarita Mexicana, La Pergola, Sato, China Gar-



den, Takht Jamsheed, Rasoi by Vineet, Fusions by Tala, and Zahle.

This partnership reflects AUB's ongoing commitment to providing exceptional value and experiences to its customers, with a particular focus on supporting local businesses and offering unique and memorable experiences.

This initiative is part of AUB's broader strategy to enhance customer satisfaction.

BisB unveils the third promotional interactive Tejoori Al Islami Stand 2024 at City Centre Bahrain



Tejoori Al Islami Stand at City Centre Bahrain

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB), has announced the launch of its third Tejoori Al Islami promotional and interactive stand.

This campaign aims to reward the bank's customers with numerous instant prizes, running from September 25 to September 29 at City Centre Bahrain, Gate 2, Ground Floor.

Tejoori Al Islami interactive stand visitors will have the opportunity to open a new Tejoori

Al Islami account digitally, easily, and quickly. Current Tejoori account holders can increase their balance through the BisB mobile app or with the assistance of the BisB team available at the stand.

Additionally, visitors can participate in exciting games for a chance to win instant cash prizes of up to BD1,000, iPhone 16 and many more, which will also qualify them for the grand quarterly prize \$300,000. Furthermore, all Tejoori customers who invest during the campaign period and maintain



Sara AlAmmadi

their deposits until October 31 will be eligible for a draw, with a grand prize of BD10,000 for one winner.

Sara AlAmmadi, Marketing & Corporate Communications Manager at Bahrain Islamic Bank, stated: "This initiative reflects our ongoing commitment to encourage customers to save and invest through exciting and rewarding experiences by participating in interactive games and activities that offer instant cash prizes and many more. We invite everyone to visit the Tejoori Al Islami stand at City Centre Bahrain during the campaign period to open and invest in a Tejoori account."

Founder of Sooq Althahab: Shariah-compliant gold sales surge by 20% amid rate cuts and price hikes

TDT | Manama

Nawaf Saeed, founder of "Sooq Althahab," the first digital platform for purchasing and investing in gold in compliance with Islamic Sharia, emphasized that the ongoing rise in gold prices has driven more investors to allocate their capital towards gold, viewing it as a rewarding opportunity amidst current economic fluctuations.

With interest rates declining and gold reaching a record high of approximately \$2,622 per ounce (31.75 BD per gram), the "Sooq Althahab" has observed a 20% increase in demand for Sharia-compliant gold investments.

"Buying gold bullion is among the most popular methods of investing in gold due to its purity, high value, and availability in various sizes and weights, which allows investors to tailor their purchases to fit their budgets and financial objectives," stated Nawaf Saeed.

"Islamic investment in gold



Nawaf Saeed

offers a solid hedge against inflation and market volatility, and holding gold provides investors and individuals with a sense of security and stability, particularly since it represents a tangible asset that can be safely stored in vaults or banks."

Nawaf Saeed highlighted the significance of acquiring gold as a crucial asset in the face of inflation, noting that its price tends to increase over time, providing individuals and novice investors with a secure investment pathway.

For those starting their in-

vestment journey, converting cash savings into gold bullion offers a viable alternative to keeping funds in banks, especially given the declining interest rates. "Sooq Althahab" app further enhances this opportunity by offering Sharia-compliant Musharaka (partnership) contracts.

"These contracts not only enable gold to serve as a hedge against inflation by increasing its value, but they also function within a secure environment to generate liquidity and profits, creating an additional revenue stream," stated Nawaf Saeed.

Additionally, various Sharia-compliant investment options are available, including gold-backed Musharaka contracts and gold savings accounts. According to projections, gold is expected to remain a safe haven in 2024 amidst ongoing economic and geopolitical uncertainties, prompting investors to seek stability and security.

Bahrain stumbles against Cambodia in AFC U20 qualifier

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Following their 1-0 win against Chinese Taipei on Saturday, Bahrain's U20 squad entered the third round of the AFC U20 Asian Cup Qualification with high hopes, but they stumbled in a frustrating 0-1 loss to Cambodia.

The match, held at Fu Jen University in New Taipei yesterday, saw Bahrain dominate possession but ultimately fall to a 68th-minute goal from Cambodia's Mean Chanrith.

This defeat puts Bahrain in third place in Group B, leaving their path to qualification more challenging than expected.

The Break Down

The game started with Bahrain taking control of the ball, setting a quick pace and putting early pressure on Cambodia's backline. Rashed Mejairan and Abdullah Hesham worked hard to create opportunities, but Cambodia's defense stood firm.

The remainder of the first half saw Bahrain impose themselves with precise passing and quick transitions.



Bahrain's U20 players react after the match

They constantly threatened Cambodia's backline, and their pace in attack was particularly impressive, led by Ali Younes and Mahdi Abdullah.

However, Bahrain was unable to find the breakthrough. The Cambodian defense absorbed pressure and patiently waited for their moment.

In the 68th minute, that moment arrived. A lapse in concentration from Bahrain allowed Cambodia's Mean Chanrith to find space and grab the winner.

It was a harsh reminder of the importance of defensive focus throughout the entire match,

especially when Bahrain had been in control for much of the game.

Despite the efforts of Isa Al Khazami and Saud Mohsin, Bahrain could not find an equalizer. Ultimately, a lack of finishing in the final third proved costly.

This defeat puts Bahrain in third place in Group B, with one win and two losses, trailing Cambodia and Uzbekistan.

Bahrain's hopes for qualification are now hanging, but the team remains focused on their next fixtures against Nepal on the 27th and then group leaders Uzbekistan on the 29th. Every point from here on is critical.

Bahrain 1 team wins gold in NHRA drag race, HH Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad commends progress

TDT | Manama

Bahrain 1 team secured a major victory in North Carolina, USA, winning one of the most prestigious global championships in drag racing, the NHRA Carolina Nationals. This win strengthens the team's international standing and highlights the skill and expertise of its drivers in this thrilling sport.

His Highness Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa, HM the King's Personal Representative, and the owner of Bahrain 1 team, affirmed that the team's success in one of the world's top drag racing competitions in North Carolina is a testament to its advanced level in motorsport globally.

His Highness attributed the team's continued global achievements to the support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime



His Highness Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Minister, as well as the backing of national companies.

His Highness expressed his appreciation to the drivers, technical crew, and all those involved in this remarkable success, "Your dedication and determination to advance Bahrain's position have made this dream a reality. We promise to con-

tinue providing full support for the development of drag racing and further strengthening Bahrain's presence on the global sports stage".

The race took place at the zMAX Dragway, one of the most challenging tracks in the world. The Bahrain 1 team demonstrated outstanding skill, outpacing top international teams to claim first place, despite the competition featuring cars equipped with the latest global technologies, adding to the intensity of the competitiveness.

Khalid Al Balooshi, the team manager, congratulated HH Shaikh Abdullah bin Hamad on this significant victory.



Bahrain 1 team celebrates after their win

Beyond the whistle

Video Assistant Referee technology debuts in Bahrain Premier League, aims to enhance fairness and accuracy

● VAR launched for the 2024-2025 season in Bahrain

● Installed in three major stadiums across the country

● Seven reviews in first six matches led to correct decisions

● Learning from European leagues' mistakes for smoother implementation

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

The introduction of Video Assistant Referee (VAR) technology in the Bahraini Premier League signals a transformative moment for Bahraini football.

As the 2024-2025 season began, fans, players, and officials were introduced to a powerful asset designed to enhance the fairness and precision of match officiating. With this system, the Bahrain Football Association (BFA) aims to bring Bahraini football to a new level of accuracy, bringing better decisions on the pitch.

A Fresh Start

As Bahrain implements VAR for the first time, the league has taken measures to ensure smoother operations. The BFA has invested in training referees and technicians to prepare for this technological leap. The system has been installed in three major stadiums: Bahrain National Stadium, Khalifa Sports City Stadium, and Shaikh Ali bin



VAR system in action in the Bahraini Premier League

Mohammed Al Khalifa Stadium. Abdulrahman Abdulqader, the BFA's VAR project manager, expressed satisfaction with the system's initial success, saying that implementing VAR required significant effort, especially in synchronizing across multiple venues. Despite time constraints, the opening round was successful, with all technical elements functioning correctly due to six hours of meticulous preparation before the matches.

In its debut, VAR was used in the first six matches of the season, with seven reviews conducted, all resulting in correct decisions. These interventions covered key scenarios such as goals, penalties, red cards, and mistaken identity. Although these checks may have delayed play momentarily, the end result—a fairer match—was worth the extra time.

Striking the Right Balance

Speaking exclusively to Hussain Almaskati of TDT, Ali Al-

Samahiji, Chairman of the Referees Committee, discussed the challenges and insights gained in implementing the VAR system. He highlighted that, "One of the biggest challenges was applying the VAR protocol and learning how to handle it, particularly memorizing each step accurately. However, with time, and thanks to the hard work of our referees and instructors, these difficulties were overcome."

He explained that VAR is still new in football and that countries using the technology continuously receive updated instructions from FIFA. Early on, Bahraini referees struggled with understanding and applying the VAR protocol correctly, but their perseverance, combined with the support of the committee and expert instructors, allowed them to overcome these hurdles.

When asked about the impact of VAR on improving match decisions, AlSamahiji added, "There is no doubt that VAR was introduced to reduce errors in

when and how VAR can be used. With more experience, this understanding will improve."

However, AlSamahiji emphasized that despite the initial acceptance, more time is needed for players, coaches, and fans to fully grasp when a referee will be called upon to review a decision, and for which types of incidents.

Reflecting on what Bahrain has learned from other leagues already using VAR, AlSamahiji said, "Discussions with countries already using the technology have greatly accelerated our learning curve. It has also allowed us to foresee potential challenges and avoid the mistakes others have made." He emphasized that consulting with these countries played a crucial role in helping Bahrain implement VAR more smoothly.

Finally, addressing how the committee would handle potential disputes over VAR decisions, especially in high-stakes matches, AlSamahiji reassured, "Our doors are always open to clubs and athletes to discuss any contentious decisions or unclear rulings. We are fully prepared to explain and clarify any complex situations." The committee is committed to maintaining open communication and ensuring that all concerns regarding VAR decisions are properly addressed, especially in critical matches.

VAR's Bumpy Road in Europe

Since its rollout in top European leagues, VAR has been both a beacon of fairness and a source of controversy. It was designed to correct clear errors in key moments—such as goals, penalties, and red cards—yet its introduction has not been seamless. Many fans initially feared that VAR would strip away the human element from refereeing, replacing instinct and decision-making



Ali AlSamahiji, Chairman of the Referees Committee

with technology. Ironically, VAR has shown that human error can still be present, even with video replays.

Lengthy reviews, inconsistent decisions, and varying interpretations of rules have led to frustrations. For example, in England, it's not uncommon to see match-defining VAR decisions take several minutes, only to remain contentious even after review. However, Bahrain's approach can avoid some of these pitfalls with careful preparation, as the BFA and its referees must learn from the missteps of more experienced leagues while refining the technology to suit the local game.

VAR is designed to support referees, not replace them, aiming to reduce errors, not eliminate them entirely—football, after all, is an emotional and subjective game, and even with technological assistance, decisions will still be debated.

As officials noted, errors are an inherent part of the game globally, but adopting VAR can significantly reduce them. If used effectively, this technology could be a game-changer, delivering fairer outcomes and addressing many of the controversial calls that have plagued football for years.



Bahrain becomes the 50th country to implement VAR technology in its top-tier football league, following FIFA's recommendation to use VAR in all top-level competitions

matches, giving referees a second chance to review crucial incidents. This ensures fairness on the pitch."

Regarding the reactions from players, coaches, and fans after the initial implementation, AlSamahiji noted, "The feedback has been generally positive, but naturally, it will take time for everyone to fully understand

Bahrain prepares for 2024 School Games

Bahrain finalizes preparations for historic event, welcoming 5,000 students from 80 countries from October 23-31

● **ISSF praises Bahrain's sports infrastructure ahead of major international school sports event**

● **Event aims to strengthen cultural and sports ties between nations**

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

As Bahrain gears up to host the 2024 International School Games, Ali Isa Eshaqi, Chairman of the Executive Committee for the event, held a meeting with a delegation from the International School Sports Federation (ISSF).

The gathering, which took place yesterday, marked a significant milestone in the country's preparations for the largest international school sports event in history, set to take place from October 23-31.

During the meeting, Eshaqi



Ali Isa Eshaqi during a meeting with a delegation from the International School Sports Federation

was joined by other key officials, including Madden Al-Wanas, Chairman of the Technical Committee, and Abdul Redha Ashouri, Chairman of the Housing Committee.

Al-Wanas welcomed the ISSF delegation, who praised Bahrain's state-of-the-art sports facilities and infrastructure,

expressing confidence in the Kingdom's ability to host such a monumental event.

Strengthening Cultural and Sports Ties

Discussions revolved around ensuring seamless cooperation between Bahrain's committees and the international federation,

with Eshaqi highlighting how the School Games would serve as an opportunity to strengthen both cultural and sports relationships with the participating nations.

"This tournament is not just about competition; it's about building bridges and promoting unity through sport," he stated.



The 2024 International School Games will feature 25 sports, including archery, badminton, basketball, and wrestling, with Bahrain fielding the largest team of over 400 participants

Inspections and Progress Updates

Key points of the meeting included a review of the facilities where the games will be hosted, confirming that inspections will take place to guarantee they meet the highest standards.

The delegation received updates on team registrations, competition schedules, and logistical arrangements.

Al-Wanas reaffirmed the tech-

nical committee's commitment to delivering an event that meets the strictest international standards, ensuring a world-class experience for both athletes and officials.

United Efforts

The meeting concluded with a clear action plan for future visits and collaborative efforts to streamline communication among the various committees involved in the event's organization.

Eshaqi and his team emphasized the importance of maintaining a united front as the countdown to the 2024 School Games continues.

As Bahrain prepares to welcome students from around the globe, the event stands as a testament to the Kingdom's growing reputation as a premier sports hub in the region.

The Games are expected to boost both participation and Bahrain's global sports profile.

The meeting closed with a renewed focus on teamwork, as all parties work together to ensure the success of the School Games.



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